

HET MEETING

May 13, 2021

AGENDA:

1. Finalize HET's 2nd Home In Tacoma Project letter (draft letter attached)
2. Home In Tacoma status and next steps
3. Discuss how the HET can contribute to ongoing citywide equity and antiracism initiatives

DRAFT LETTER:

13 May 2021

Mayor Woodards and Councilmembers-

It is our honor to present the Housing Equity Taskforce's (HET) Home In Tacoma Project housing policy recommendations to the City Council. The primary objectives of these recommendations are to increase housing supply, housing choice, and housing affordability throughout the city in order to make progress toward Tacoma's equity and antiracism goals.

We affirm that part of the solution to housing affordability and to addressing historic racial injustice in the area of housing lies in expanding housing types citywide. Both the Low-scale and Mid-scale housing options have substantial affordability benefits for both rental and ownership housing in the long term, but we must stress that these market-based policy solutions have a lag time and their benefits only start to occur if reform begins to be implemented now.

We applaud the Planning Commission's balanced approach of presenting two housing options to the public and then responding to public feedback by making changes that incorporate the best elements of each option, while removing the elements with the most negative impacts. We provide further comment to reinforce how the Planning Commission's revised scenario supports the desired intent of the Housing Equity Taskforce to address the disproportionate impacts of the housing crisis on people of color and others facing economic disadvantages. The Planning Commissions' initiative to address housing affordability by setting targets by income group helps to address this crisis head on.

Aligning with the Regional Vision of Housing near Centers and Transit

It is a rare opportunity for the City to be able to offer tangible benefits to low-income, minority, and vulnerable populations without additional expenditures, but this can be done if the City consciously realigns Tacoma's vision for housing growth with the Puget Sound Regional Council's vision for housing near centers and transit.

While housing occupies the largest household expense for moderate-to-low income families, transportation costs are a close second. By expanding housing options immediately adjacent to transit, the City can empower more residents with the option of being one-or-no-car-households, leading to thousands of dollars saved per year, which can improve financial outlook, housing stability, and long term potential for homeownership. Pierce Transit in particular is looking to

empower youth and seniors to take transit with fareless service, which could begin as soon as 2022.

Supporting Racial and Economic Equity

Because Pierce and Sound Transit have structured service along corridors that already 1) connect to growth centers, 2) serve diverse areas, and 3) provide neighborhood coverage, allowing a diversity of housing types on blocks adjacent to transit would help to reverse the exclusionary impacts of zoning policies implemented in the 1950's--broadening racial and economic equity across 'high opportunity areas' identified by the City.

Planning for Deeply Affordable Housing

Recognizing that the City's financial capacity is limited to provide deeply affordable housing units for people who have no income or incomes below the poverty line, we identify the expansion of housing types citywide, along with allowing denser housing types near transit and centers as being essential to supporting rental housing affordability for working class households making between 40-60% AMI. By implementing these changes the City can have a clear focus on working with non-profit housing partners to develop deeply affordable housing units for those making substantially less than 50% AMI, allowing the market to support options for other groups.

In closing

The Housing Equity Taskforce encourages the City Council to support the Planning Commission's proposed hybrid scenario, low and mid-scale residential land use designations, and scope of work for affordability, anti-displacement measures and design requirements for Phase 2 of *Home in Tacoma*. These proposed changes reflect public input and set the stage for future community engagement in the rest of 2021 and into 2022.

In the spirit of service,

<Housing Equity Taskforce Members>